

[illegible]

A system and method for communicating between nodes in a communications network. The network includes nodes that broadcast and receive data packets over a radio channel. The system includes a distributed trunking method that distributes the communications between the nodes over multiple channels. Voice and other data may be broadcast over data channels, while information regarding the availability of the data channels is broadcast over a control channel. Access to the control channel is controlled using a protocol that may include carrier sense multiple access with collision avoidance (CSMA/CA), time division multiple access (TDMA) or a hybrid of CSMA/TDMA.